

PEMA RINZIN
WINGS OF JOY
MARCH 17–APRIL 16, 2016

OPENING RECEPTION:
Thursday, March 17, 6–8pm



Bird Mandala (Orange), 2014
Ground mineral pigments, natural dye, Sumi ink, gold on canvas
40 x 40 inches

Joshua Liner Gallery presents *Wings of Joy*, a solo exhibition of new paintings by Brooklyn-based Tibetan artist Pema Rinzin. This will be Rinzin's third exhibition with the gallery featuring twelve new paintings rendered in ground mineral pigments, Sumi ink, and gold. Throughout a career spanning more than three decades, travelling and living in disparate locations around the globe, Rinzin—a master in the art of traditional Thangka painting—seeks to spread Tibetan Buddhist philosophy through his striking contemporary practice. The artist's work carries a modern aesthetic, while simultaneously incorporating the techniques of centuries old traditional Thangka painting. The artist will be present for the opening reception on Thursday, March 17, 2016.

The chief ambition of Rinzin's new work seeks to spread the importance of peace and balance amongst all living beings. As the title of the exhibition suggests, many of the artist's new works depict various species of birds. Yet these birds are not simply avian representations, but instead symbolize fundamental Buddhist teachings of peace, joy and inspiration. Rinzin elaborates, "The main message of [this exhibition] is inspiration. Since mankind was born, wings have been one of the most inspirational symbols... In Tibetan philosophy in particular, the enlightened beings have wings. All of these paintings are a solid inspiration about a universe of joy." This conception is powerfully displayed in Rinzin's *Bird Mandala* series. The artist adopts a pattern of concentric circles as seen in traditional mandala paintings, using various ground mineral pigments including gold and lapis lazuli; all of precious gem quality. Each circle is overlaid with throngs of pheasants, cranes, owls and parrots delicately illustrated in Sumi ink.

Another poignant objective of Rinzin's most recent body of work seeks to bring inspiration for Tibetan people and Tibet, which has been occupied by China since 1951. The artist continues, "Since I was born, Tibet has been lost and all Tibetan people have faced many problems but we have never lost hope. It is my hope, my uplifting joy to have wings for every Tibetan. The wings are there to be found even if you have no hope left."

Growing up in Dharamsala, India, Rinzin trained with master Thangka painters including Kalsang Oshoe, Khepa Gonpo, and Rigdzin Paljor from 1979 to 1983. The artist subsequently taught Renaissance, Impressionist, Abstract Expressionist art, and cartoon drawing for eight years at the Tibetan Children's Village School in Dharamsala. This multidisciplinary experience early on in Rinzin's career has had a lasting influence on his work as a contemporary artist. Unlike classical Thangka paintings, which traditionally depict Buddhist deities, scenes from the life of the Buddha, and mandalas, Rinzin's work incorporates contemporary elements, informed by his cross-cultural experiences and influences of Western art. In *Peace Boom 1*, a mass of flag-like forms swarm in the center of the painting, surrounded by a bold lapis lazuli background. Largely abstract, the inclusion of these undulating shapes creates a departure from the traditional definition of Thangka painting. Each form bares an amalgamation of distinctive designs derived from ancient Buddhist patterns, interlocked with flames of gold. Aside from the artist's classical Thangka influences, Rinzin notes his experience with Western art has had a significant impact on his work, particularly the work of Gustav Klimt and Wassily Kandinsky.

Born in 1966 in Tibet, Pema Rinzin spent his childhood growing up in India. Rinzin received a degree in Tibetan Traditional Thangka Painting and Fine Art from Tibetan Children's Village Painting School in Dharamsala, India. Rinzin was the first Tibetan artist in residence at the Rubin Museum of Art in New York, where he gained prominence after his work was exhibited in the Rubin Museum's 2010 group exhibition *Tradition Transformed*; New York's first museum exhibition of contemporary Tibetan artists. In 2007, Rinzin founded the New York Tibetan Art Studio, the only school in New York committed to teaching and preserving the classical art of Thangka painting. The artist's work is held in numerous public and private collections most notably by the H.H. Dalai Lama, the Rubin Museum of Art, New York, and The Shoko-ji Cultural Research Institute, Nagano, Japan. Selected solo exhibitions include *Abstract Enlightenment*, Joshua Liner Gallery, New York (2014); *Compassion Transformed*, Joshua Liner Gallery, New York (2011); *Tibetan Fine Art Exhibition*, Villa Dessauer, Bamberg, Germany (2005). Selected group exhibitions include *Your Favorite Artist's Favorite Artist*, Joshua Liner Gallery, New York, NY (2014); *New Voices*, Active Space, New York, NY (2014); *Tibet. Art. Now*, Palazzo Nerucci, Castel del Piano, Italy (2011); *Tradition Transformed* (2010) and *Big! Himalayan Art Exhibition* (2008), both at Rubin Museum of Art, New York, NY.



Wings of Joy, 2015, ground mineral pigments
Sumi ink, gold on canvas, 72 x 60 inches



Peace Boom 1, 2015, ground mineral pigments, natural dye, gold on
canvas, 40 x 58 inches

Contact

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Gallery Hours

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11 – 6 PM

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